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25-4471

OGC Has Reviewed

31 August 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Vice-Chairman, CIA Honor Awards Board

SUBJECT : Authority to Award the Medal of Freedom

REFERENCE : Your memorandum dated August 5, 1953, same subject

1. The reference requests our comments upon alternative proposals to obtain the authority for the award by CIA of the Medal of Freedom in accordance with Executive Order 10336 dated April 3, 1952. The first of your proposals is to amend the cited Executive Order to include the Director of Central Intelligence among those authorized to award the decoration. The second proposal is to secure a designation by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of one of the military branches of one officer detailed to CIA to be authorized to make awards.

2. As you no doubt will recall, the original Working Group on Honor Awards strongly urged the need for some form of decoration or award in recognition of outstanding service by CIA personnel. In its interim report to the Career Service Committee dated 5 June 1952, the Group specifically recommended that CIA make use of the Medal of Freedom where achievement merited the award. Prior to Executive Order 10336, however, there was no established procedure whereby heads of departments and agencies not specifically named could have obtained awards of the Medal of Freedom in deserving cases. This Agency had been instrumental in securing the insertion in the original version of the present Executive Order 10336 of the contents of Paragraph 5, referred to in your memorandum.

3. The availability of a mechanism to obtain awards of the Medal of Freedom was, however, not deemed sufficient to provide adequate recognition of the multiplicity of circumstances of outstanding service to CIA. Accordingly, a proposed Executive Order establishing the National Security Medal was discussed with the Bureau of the Budget. It was firmly noted by the Bureau that CIA had supported a means of securing awards of one medal for its personnel only a short while before and had already found it necessary to seek approval of a second. Initial opposition of the Bureau of the Budget was evidently withdrawn and the former DCI obtained the President's signature to Executive Order 10431 on January 19, 1954.

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4. In view of the foregoing, it would appear to us that any attempt by CIA to obtain additional amendments to Executive Order 10335 at this time would encounter strong opposition from the Bureau of the Budget. We would, therefore, recommend against any such approach for the present.

5. With respect to the alternate proposal, that of securing a delegation from a Secretary presently entitled to award, our advice would be to refrain from efforts to secure such a delegation until such time as an actual deserving case cannot be favorably placed before the Secretary of Defense. Our basis for approaching one of the Secretaries to solicit his delegation would be that existing procedures for obtaining the award for CIA personnel were inadequate and rendered it impossible in meritorious cases to grant proper recognition of achievement. Until such time as actual circumstances support this line of approach, we are of the opinion that attempts to secure delegation ought not to be made.

6. At such time as you feel some concrete effort to secure a more satisfactory means of awarding the Medal of Freedom to CIA personnel should be undertaken, we would be pleased to assist in any manner you desire.

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Office of the General Counsel

OGC:GHK/tkl
(29 Aug. 53)

cc: OGC chrono
OGC subj ✓
GHK file